



# NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

**TODD P. GRAVES**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## NITRO UPDATE

### **1<sup>st</sup> CO-DEFENDANT SENTENCED FOR ROLE IN METH CONSPIRACY**

**KANSAS CITY, Mo.** – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced today that the first of three convicted co-defendants was sentenced in federal court today for her involvement in a methamphetamine conspiracy. The sentencing, Graves said, is the result of work completed by the NITRO Task Force.

**Laurie E. Baker**, 21, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Ortrie D. Smith this morning to two years in federal prison without parole.

On March 12, 2004, **Baker** pleaded guilty to conspiracy to manufacture and distribute 50 grams or more of methamphetamine. By pleading guilty, she admitted that the conspiracy took place between Oct. 1, 2002, and Sept. 18, 2003, in Grundy County, Mo.

**Baker** is the third co-defendant to plead guilty in the conspiracy.

On April 13, 2004, **Gary Michael Swafford**, 31, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to manufacture and distribute 50 grams or more of methamphetamine between Oct. 1, 2002, and Sept. 18, 2003, in Grundy County.

On June 28, 2004, **Patricia Jean Chipps**, 36, also pleaded guilty to conspiracy to manufacture and distribute 50 grams or more of methamphetamine between Oct. 1, 2002, and Sept. 18, 2003, in Grundy County.

Each of the co-defendants was charged in a sealed indictment returned by a federal grand jury on Sept. 17, 2003, in Kansas City. The indictment was unsealed and made public upon the defendants' arrest and first appearance in court on Sept. 24, 2003, in Kansas City.

The case is being prosecuted by Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Bruce Rhoades. It was

investigated by the Grundy County, Mo., Sheriff's Office, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Trenton, Mo., Police Department, the Mercer County, Mo., Sheriff's Department, the Daviess County, Mo., Sheriff's Department and the NITRO Task Force. NITRO is the Northwest Missouri Interagency Team Response Operation, a joint law enforcement effort by the United States Attorney's Office and federal, state and local law enforcement agencies in the 16-county region.

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This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

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